NUMB. 42. SATURDAY, *August* 11, 1750.

Mihi tarda fluunt ingrataque tempora.

HOR.

To the RAMBLER.

Mr RAMBLER,

I AM no great admirer of grave writings, and therefore very frequently lay your papers aside before I have read them through; yet I cannot but confeſs that, by ſlow degrees, you have raiſed my opinion of your underſtanding, and, that, though I believe it will be long before I can be prevailed upon to regard you with much kindneſs, you have, however, more of my eſteem than thoſe whom I ſometimes make happy with opportunities to fill my tea-pot, or pick up my fan. I ſhall therefore chuſe you for the confident of my diſtreſſes, and aſk your counſel with regard to the means of conquering or eſcaping them, though I never expect from you any of that ſoftneſs and pliancy, which conſtitutes the perfection of a companion for the ladies: as in the place where I now am, I have recourſe

to the maſtiff for protection, though I have no intention of making him a lap-dog.

My mamma is a very fine lady, who has more numerous, and more frequent aſſemblies at her houſe, than any other perſon in the ſame quarter of the town. I was bred from my earlieſt infancy in a perpetual tumult of pleaſure, and remember to have heard of little elſe than meſſages, viſits, play-houſes, and balls, of the aukwardneſs of one woman, and the coquetry of another, the charming convenience of ſome riſing faſhion, the difficulty of playing a new game, the incidents of a maſquerade, and the dreſſes of a court night. I knew before I was ten years old all the rules of paying and receiving viſits, and to how much civility every one of my acquaintance was entitled; and was able to return, with the proper degree of reſerve, or of vivacity, the ſtated and eſtabliſhed anſwer to every compliment; ſo that I was very ſoon celebrated as a wit, and a beauty, and had heard before I was thirteen all that is ever ſaid to a young lady. My mother was generous to ſo uncommon a degree as to be pleaſed with my advance into life, and allowed me, without envy or reproof, to enjoy the ſame happineſs with

with herſelf; though moſt women about her own age were very angry to ſee young girls ſo forward, and many fine gentlemen told her how cruel it was to throw new chains upon mankind, and to tyrannize over them at the ſame time with her own charms, and thoſe of her daughter.

I HAVE now lived two and twenty years, and have paſſed of each year nine months in town, and three at Richmond; ſo that my time has been ſpent uniformly in the ſame company, and the ſame amuſements, except as faſhion has introduced new diverſions, or the revolutions of the gay world have afforded new ſucceſſions of wits and beaus. However my mother is ſo good an œconomiſt of pleaſure, that I have no ſpare hours upon my hands; for every morning brings ſome new appointment, and every night is hurried away by the neceſſity of making our appearance at different places, and of being with one lady at the opera, and with another at the card table.

WHEN the time came of ſettling our ſcheme of felicity for the ſummer, it was detemined that I ſhould pay a viſit to a rich aunt in

in a remote county. As you know the chief converſation of all tea tables, in the ſpring, ariſes from a communication of the manner in which time is to be paſſed till winter, it was a great relief to the barrenneſs of our topics, to relate the pleaſures that were in ſtore for me, to deſcribe my uncle's ſeat, with the park and gardens, the charming walks, and beautiful waterfalls; and every one told me how much ſhe envied me, and what ſatisfaction ſhe had once enjoyed in a ſituation of the ſame kind.

As we are all credulous in our own favour, and willing to imagine ſome latent ſatisfaction in any thing which we have not experienced, I will confeſs to you, without reſtraint, that I had ſuffered my head to be filled with expectations of ſome nameleſs pleaſure in a rural life, and that I hoped for the happy hour that ſhould ſet me free from noiſe, and flutter, and ceremony, diſmiſs me to the peaceful ſhade, and lull me in content and tranquillity. To ſolace myſelf under the miſery of delay, I ſometimes heard a ſtudious lady of my acquaintance read paſtorals, I was delighted with ſcarce any talk but of leaving the town,

and never went to bed without dreaming of groves, and meadows, and friſking lambs.

AT length I had all my cloaths in a trunk, and ſaw the coach at the door; I ſprung in with ecſtacy, quarrelled with my maid for being too long in taking leave of the other ſervants, and rejoiced as the ground grew leſs which lay between me and the completion of my wiſhes. A few days brought me to a large old houſe, encompaſſed on three ſides with woody hills, and looking from the front on a gentle river, the ſight of which renewed all my expectations of pleaſure, and gave me ſome regret for having lived ſo long without the enjoyment which theſe delightful ſcenes were now to afford me. My aunt came out to receive me, but in a dreſs ſo far removed from the preſent faſhion, that I could ſcarcely look upon her without laughter, which would have been no kind requital for the trouble which ſhe had taken to make herſelf fine againſt my arrival. The night and the next morning were driven along with enquiries about our family; my aunt then explained our pedigree, and told me ſtories of my great grandfather's bravery in the civil wars,

wars, nor was it leſs than three days before I could perſuade her to leave me to myſelf.

At laſt œconomy prevailed, ſhe went in the uſual manner about her own affairs, and I was at liberty to range in the wilderneſs, and ſit by the caſcade. The novelty of the objects about me pleaſed me for a while, but after a few days they were new no longer, and I ſoon began to perceive that the country was not my element; that ſhades, and flowers, and lawns, and waters, had very ſoon exhauſted all their power of pleaſing, and that I had not in myſelf any fund of ſatisfaction with which I could ſupply the loſs of my cuſtomary amuſements.

I unhappily told my aunt, in the firſt warmth of our embraces, that I had leave to ſtay with her ten weeks. Six only are yet gone, and how ſhall I live through the remaining four? I go out and return; I pluck a flower, and throw it away; I catch an inſect, and when I have examined its colours, ſet it at liberty; I fling a pebble into the water and ſee one circle ſpread after another. When it chances to rain, I walk in the great hall, and watch the minute-hand upon the

dial

or play with a litter of kittens, which the cat happens to have brought in a lucky time.

My aunt is afraid I ſhall grow melancholy, and therefore encourages the neighbouring gentry to viſit us. They came at firſt with great eagerneſs to ſee the fine lady from London, but when we meet, we had no common to pick on which we could converſe; they had no curioſity after plays, operas, or muſick: and I find as little ſatisfaction from their accounts of the quarrels, or alliances of families, whoſe names, when once I can eſcape, I ſhall never hear. The women have now ſeen me, know how my gown is made, and are ſatisfied; the men are generally afraid of me, and ſay little becauſe they think themſelves not at liberty to talk rudely.

Thus am I condemned to ſolitude; the day moves ſlowly forward, and I ſee the dawn with uneaſineſs, becauſe I conſider the night is at a great diſtance. I have tried to ſleep by a brook, but find its murmurs ineffectual; ſo that I am forced to be awake at leaſt twelve hours, without viſits, without cards, without laughter, and without flattery. I walk becauſe I am diſguſted with ſitting ſtill, and ſit down

down becauſe I am weary with walking. I have no motive to action, nor any object of love, or hate, or fear, or inclination. I cannot dreſs with ſpirit, for I have neither rival nor admirer. I cannot dance without a partner, nor be kind, or cruel, without a lover.

SUCH is the life of Euphelia, and ſuch it is likely to continue for a month to come. I have not yet declared againſt exiſtence, nor called upon the deſtinies to cut my thread; but I have ſincerely reſolved not to condemn myſelf to ſuch another ſummer, nor too haſtily to flatter myſelf with happineſs. Yet I have heard, Mr Rambler, of thoſe who never thought themſelves ſo much at eaſe as in ſolitude, and cannot but ſuſpect it to be ſome way or other my own fault, that, without great pain, either of mind or body, I am thus weary of myſelf: that the current of youth ſtagnates, and that I am languiſhing in a dead calm, for want of ſome external impulſe. I ſhall therefore think you a benefactor to our ſex, if you will teach me the art of living alone; for I am confident that a thouſand and a thouſand and a thouſand ladies, who affect to talk with ecſtacies of the pleaſures of the country, are in reality, like me, longing

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